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Acronyms

CI	Customary Institutions
CO	Country Office
DFAP	Development Food Assistance Program
DIP	Detail Implementation Plan
ETB	Ethiopian Birr (local currency)
DS	Direct Support
DNH	Do No Harm
FDP	Food Distribution Point
FDQA	Food Distribution Quality Assurance
FY	Fiscal Year
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
HH	Household
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
IR	Intermediate Result
JEOP	Joint Emergency Operations Program
KFSTF	Kebele ¹ Food Security Task Force
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBL	Master Beneficiary List
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprise
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PASS	Payroll Attendance Sheet Software
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PIM	Program Implementation Manual
PJME	Participatory Joint Monitoring and Evaluation
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
PW	Public Work
SC	Save the Children
SWC	Soil and Water Conservation
T2FS	Transformation to Food Security
TDS	Temporary Direct Support
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
VSLA	Village Saving and Loan Association
WFSTF	Woreda ² Food Security Task Force

¹ Kebele: Peasant Association, the smallest administrative unit

² Woreda: District

Introduction

The Transformation to Food Security – Development Food Assistance Program (T2FS-DFAP), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has been implemented by Save the Children (SC) in the Oromia and Somali Regions of southern Ethiopia in support of the Government of Ethiopia's (GoE) Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) since October 2011. The T2FS-DFAP promotes food security in its operational woredas of Yabello, Arero, Dugda Dawa, and Dhas Woredas in Oromia Region, and Dolo Ado Woreda in Somali Region. This Annual Report covers the period of October 2015 to September 2016.

The primary objective of the program has been to ensure food security among food-insecure households, thereby improving beneficiaries' resilience to shocks, which has included food distribution while promoting Natural Resource Management (NRM), social service asset development, capacity building, and livelihoods activities. These activities were designed to meet the immediate needs of beneficiaries through food transfers, preserve natural resources, build communal assets, and provide soft skills trainings to bring about a transformational change among the implementation communities. The 2016 Fiscal Year (FY) was a busy period during which a number of activities under T2FS-DFAP's five intermediate result areas were successfully implemented.

September 2016 marked the official closing of T2FS-DFAP's activities, with the exception of contingency commodity distribution, to the Oromia and Somali Regional governments. Closeout workshops were held in Yabello Woreda of Oromia Region, and Dolo Ado Woreda of Somali Region in September of 2016. The two-day workshops presented the program's achievements during its five-year period, reiterated sustainability strategies, and opened a platform to discuss challenges and lessons learned. The first day of presentations were followed by a half-day tour of the implementation projects, giving participants a chance to see firsthand some of T2FS-DFAP's most prominent accomplishments.

Having received approval from USAID for a No-Cost Extension (from Oct. 1, 2016 – Dec.30, 2016), key program staff, both at the country and field offices, were engaged in finalizing closeout procedures, documentation, and other areas requiring their specified expertise during the last part of the reporting period.

A study conducted by an independent consultant on Program Learning and Best Practices³ in Borena and Dollo Ado implementation areas was finalized in this reporting period and is provided as Annex 2. The study highlighted impactful Public Work (PW) and NRM centered practices. It emphasized the importance of continuing communal asset activities such as invasive bush clearing and birka (underground cisterns) construction. The positive implications of communal asset developments are evident in serving immediate and long-term needs of pastoral and agro-pastoral program woredas, as well as instilling in the residents a sense of ownership. Findings further underscored the need to strengthen capacity building efforts, monitor documentation and planning; and internal and external collaboration to ensure synergetic program operations.

³ Bekele, G. (2016). *Program Learning and Best Practices Documentation Study in Borena and Dollo Areas, Ethiopia*. (Unpublished report). Save the Children, Addis Ababa

Quarterly Achievements against Intermediate Results (IR)

IR 1.1: Timeliness, appropriateness, and predictability of food transfers improved

T2FS-DFAP continued its fifth and last year of beneficiary targeting, registration, validation and ration distribution in four woredas of Oromia and one woreda of Somali Region. The transfers commenced during the month of January 2016 and were anticipated to end in September 2016, but with USAID's concurrence the transfer season is now planned to continue through December 2016 with two rounds of additional distributions in the four woredas of Oromia.

To achieve targets under this IR, the program focused on commodity receipt, storage, movement and handling between various nodes and internodes, distribution, reporting, and documentation. Additionally, the program facilitated registration of eligible individuals and validating eligibility to mitigate unintended use of commodity resources.

USAID Comment: Given the observation of both strengths and weaknesses, what key lessons has SAVE documented that should be shared to improve verification and targeting in development food assistance activities?

Response: Key issues included awareness training for key stakeholders, active participation of NGO staff during the process of actual targeting and verification, conducting additional HH verification in areas where it was not possible to participate real time process, added transparency by posting BNF lists at Kebeles and DPs for a month and finally taking action against liable individuals. For the Arero woreda issues, beneficiaries were taken off the list and new registrations were disallowed till annual recertification process. Apart from the issue in one of the kebeles of the Arero woreda, targeting and registration process was optimal for rest of the Oromia woredas.

Key processes regarding supply chain management included commodity surveys at discharge and delivery, storage, transportation, distribution planning, and final distribution point management. During the reporting period, a total of 34,994.13 MT of commodity was distributed to registered and eligible beneficiaries across seven woredas, of which 34,311.66MT was distributed among regular PSNP beneficiaries, and 682.47 MT was distributed as contingency rations in Oromia and Somali Regions. The transfer detail includes 12,407.91 MT of commodities that was distributed to the beneficiaries in Dolo Bay and Bare woredas with Joint Emergency Operations Program (JEOP) support⁴.

Contingency distribution was conducted during the months of July to September 2016. A total of 682.47MT of resources were distributed to 15,069 participants. During regular and contingency transfers, SC ensured that verification of beneficiaries against master beneficiary lists was conducted by the Food Distributor and under the presence of GoE representative observers. Qualitative inputs from field visit reports revealed that beneficiaries acknowledged receipt

⁴ In connection with GOE launched PSNP IV during July 2015, T2FS caseload increased from 135,607 to 301,476 an increase of 222%; out of which 193,534 beneficiaries received support from T2FS, and 107,942 beneficiaries were supported with JEOP resources in Dollo Bay and Bare woredas which are previous T2FS-DFAP woredas

through signatures and/or thumb impressions collected by SC Food Distributors. (Annex I summarizes the details of transfer from January 1, 2016 to September 30, 2016 for each transfer component, as well as FY16 contingency transfers by woreda including JEOP supported woredas.)

Warehouse construction

Construction of new warehouses was completed in Yabello Woreda with a capacity of 2,000 MT, and Dugda Dawa Woreda with 500MT capacity. The premises were properly fenced with guardhouses and were expected to ease storage and commodity management issues in these woredas. The premises can be used to store six months of food grains for a beneficiary caseload of 21,930. The warehouse premises in Dolo Ado, Dhas, Dugda Dawa and Yabello, with all accessories such as pallets, weighing scales, plastic sheets, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits, will be handed over to the Woreda Food Security Task Forces (WFSTFs) for storing food grains related to PSNP and other emergency programs. The premises can be used for storing non-food items as deemed appropriate and necessary. Food grains stored in the facility will also have less chance of spoilage.

Staff recruitment and training

Staff recruitments and trainings were conducted at all woredas with an eye on risk mitigation and reduction. Increased caseloads translated into increased pressure at the field level. Reinforcements were made therefore to maintain efficient distribution of commodities, as well as to prevent individuals from taking unwarranted advantage of the stressful environment.

Commodity management training was further conducted by the Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) from December 17-23, 2015 for 21 T2FS-DFAP field staff, namely Woreda Commodity Coordinators, Commodity Accountants, and Public Work Officers, to emphasize compliance with documentation, improve distribution point management, address key performance indicators, and enhance Payroll Attendance Sheet Software (PASS) management.

USAID Comment: It's good to hear that trainings were provided to these staff. Were there also commodity related trainings provided to middle or lower tier staff such as storekeepers and food distributors?

Save Response: Yes, trainings and on job coaching were conducted for the food distributors and store keepers. Additionally, after each round of distribution, evaluation was conducted and weak areas were further strengthened through tailor made trainings or information sharing.

The training was followed by a PASS management training lead by GoE technical specialists from the federal and regional levels to ensure commodity management and effective usage of the PASS at the field level. Additionally, Food Distribution Quality Assurance officers (FDQA) were provided with three-day practical trainings on monitoring tools and techniques for better compliance and post distribution monitoring activities. Consistent performance and continued improvement were the key accomplishments this year resulting in timely distribution, improved documentation, and timely reporting.

Beneficiary caseload and targeting process

One of the most significant changes in this reporting period was the substantial increase in beneficiary caseloads in SC's program woredas (T2FS-DFAP program woredas were reduced to five from seven in the previous implementation year due to the significant caseload increase across the seven woredas which would have taken the program well above its Life of Award value). The T2FS-DFAP beneficiary caseload in the current five implementation woredas increased from 92,493 to 193,534 - an increase of 219% as Table I illustrates.

Table I: Change in beneficiaries between PSNP-III and PSNP IV

Woreda	PSNP III			PSNP IV			Percent Change
	PW	DS	Total	PW	DS	Total	
Yabelo	21,068	1,707	22,775	37,501	2,955	40,456	177.63%
Dugda Dawa	13,126	511	13,637	25,835	1,648	27,483	201.53%
Arero	11,814	1,201	13,015	27,604	3,767	31,371	241.04%
Dhas	4,640	617	5,257	12,192	1,579	13,771	261.96%
Dollo Ado	31,033	6,776	37,809	77,900	2,553	80,453	212.79%
Dollo Bye	17,083	5,441	22,524				
Bare	15,429	5,161	20,590				
Total	114,193	21,414	135,607	181,032	12,502	193,534	142.72%

Targeting of PSNP IV beneficiaries in the Oromia woredas was conducted by GoE representatives during the last quarter of 2015. GoE representatives confirmed that clients were selected through community based targeting, with an effective appeal mechanism and the lists were verified through public meetings. Despite efforts from GoE representatives, the process was not error free and a consensus was reached that members from GoE and SC would conduct a joint verification of beneficiary eligibility to further refine the selection process. Inclusion and exclusion errors observed were as follows:

- Old beneficiaries were omitted due to misinterpretation of PSNP IV directives
- Inflation/deflation of family size
- Multiple registration of clients
- Limiting registration of beneficiary households (HHs) by applying a cap of three individuals per HH
- Beneficiaries providing only the names of HH members under the age of 18 to reduce the number of PW days that would be required of them
- Registration of HHs who are non-members of the community

Verification of the Master Beneficiary Lists (MBL) was conducted through a fair and transparent process involving community meetings, focus group discussions, complaint-handling mechanisms, and document reviews. Beneficiary lists were posted in high traffic public places for a span of 30 days to inform community members and enable them to raise concerns. In addition, documents were reviewed and third names were included to differentiate HHs with similar names and to eliminate multiple registrations. A joint team comprised of the WFSTF, Kebele Food Security Task Force (KFSTF), Community Food Security Task Force, and SC provided solutions on the identified issues.

Despite continuous efforts by SC to encourage the Somali Regional Government to begin beneficiary targeting early, targeting began as late as November 2015 in Somali and was completed in January 2016. Community Triangulation Targeting and Community Value Based Targeting were applied in the selection process. SC staff were actively involved in the beneficiary registration process and supported the overall targeting activities at the community level.

The average size of registered beneficiary HHs is 4.54⁵, according to the Annual Survey results. This conforms to the program implementation guidelines to register a maximum of five individuals per HH. Although registration in Oromia was conducted by the GoE, various stakeholders, including the GoE, traditional institutions, and SC staff, were engaged in the verification and implementation of selection criteria, with correction of inclusion errors made as appropriate. Posting of the list after completion of the retargeting allowed community members to provide feedback and eliminate inclusion/exclusion errors. Survey data revealed 94% (IPTT 1.1.9) of the beneficiaries believed that the targeting process was fair.

Client card management

Every registered T2FS beneficiary possessed a valid client card. Client cards contain information such as full name of the beneficiary and spouse, details of HH members, name of the Kebele/woreda, updated picture of registered individuals, and PASS registration number of the HH. The cards play an important role to validate eligibility at the distribution point and are also a prime tool for transparency and accountability. The card was stamped and signed by both distributors and beneficiaries upon receipt of entitlements. During this fiscal year, the program printed and provided additional cards in all seven woredas of Oromia and Somali Regions for the following reasons:

- Newly targeted beneficiaries required cards
- Changes that occurred due to population growth (death and birth)
- Out migration of beneficiaries
- Lost cards
- Damaged cards
- Cards did not have enough space to record 2015 and 2016 transfers

Results of distribution

Annual survey data confirmed that 92% (Indicator Performance Tracking Table [IPTT] 1.1.4) of the beneficiaries collected food and got home on the same day and with no difference between planned and actual date of distribution. Beneficiaries were mobilized one day prior to the day of distribution upon food arrival at the mini-store to ensure timely distribution of their entitlements. For better management at the distribution points, distribution dates were desegregated between Kebeles and sub-Kebeles.

An improved commodity supply chain system and adherence to PSNP's transfer policies assisted the program in conducting transfers on schedule; these efforts resulted in 97% (IPTT 1.1.12) of the beneficiaries collecting food within 45 days from the date of the previous transfer. Although

⁵ This is in no way related to average household size of a beneficiary in the pastoralist area which is much higher.

this falls significantly short of an optimal 100% rate, it is important to mention that the a number of hurdles such as lack of trucks due to GoE directives in sending trucks to Djibouti to ease port congestion, flooding in Somali woredas, and clan conflict affected the normal distribution cycle.

Survey results moreover revealed that 100% (IPTT 1.1.11 and 1.1.2) of the registered beneficiary households received the intended ration size and commodity mix during the course of the year. The appropriateness of commodity type and amount further helped with adequate food provisioning at the HH level for an increased period of time.

In addition, 75% (IPTT 1.1.6) of the beneficiaries who collected entitlements from food distribution points (FDPs) were women. This is a significant achievement considering entitlements received by women members of the HH are typically used for HH consumption rather than sold in markets.

Among the T2FS-DFAP gender-sensitive program provisions was the transfer of pregnant and lactating women from PWV to Temporary Direct Support (TDS) starting from the first month of confirmed pregnancy and ending 12 months after birth. The Annual Survey states that 1,361 beneficiaries (100% of those verified pregnant; IPTT 1.1.10) received their entitlements as TDS upon indicating their pregnancy status.

USAID Comment: Was any analysis done on the lactating women?

Save Response: The commodity team did not do anything, further information may be available from the gender team.

Annual survey results also indicated that 92% of the food was consumed by HH members, with the remaining 8% of the food being used for other purposes such as sharing with others, barter to cover other household assets, to cover transportation costs, and etc. Satisfaction with the food commodities remained poor particularly for the Somali Region as beneficiaries expressed their strong dislike for red sorghum. Sorghum was disliked due to its palatability, color and requirement of milk for preparation. Unlike wheat, sorghum could not be used for breakfast, lunch, and dinner but could only be used for lunch.

USAID Comment: While we agree with these statements, could Save share the empirical evidence or tool used for this finding? Also, whose response is this? (beneficiaries, local administrative or elite groups? is it male or female beneficiary households or both?). Finally, we are interested to know, what did they use the non-preferred food for ultimately (household consumption vs sales)?

Save Response: This is a finding from our PDMs and survey. This was a response echoed from all groups of clientele, elites, GoE stakeholders, etc.

The implementation of the SC commodity management plan resulted in improved commodity movement throughout the entire chain. Gaps were successfully identified through performance monitoring and follow up monitoring, in addition to ongoing Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) and surveys. These monitoring tools enabled corrective actions to be taken towards identified challenges including gaps in registration, warehousing distribution, and documentation. A

commodity review was conducted by USAID in June 2016; SC has requested a copy of this report in order to identify any additional weaknesses to address or strengths to build upon, but as of the submission of the ARR, has not received a copy.

Additionally, during the reporting period, SC finalized its response to a written USAID commodity review submitted to SC on July 13, 2015. On August 10, 2015, SC responded to most of the concerns raised through a written response. Issues raised involved undated payroll sheets, unauthorized dispatches, PASS implementation, documentation discrepancy, poor and/or incomplete records, distribution delays, over- and under payment, and record manipulation. SC successfully addressed most of these issues with documental evidence. For the alleged manipulation issue, SC, with USAID's consent, SC hired an independent law firm to conduct a thorough investigation of the raised allegation.

A.W. Thomas was requested to determine whether client cards from January 2014 through June 2015 accurately reflect distributions made to beneficiaries, and to estimate the extent of any related discrepancies between entitlement and what was provided. The firm further had the task of examining whether accurate payments/rations were provided to eligible beneficiaries during the period from January 2014 through June 2015, including those who remained absent.

After concluding a detailed audit, spanning over more than six months in FY2016 (the report was submitted to FFP on April, 2016), examining documents, conducting interviews with program beneficiaries, and evaluating internal control and risk mitigation systems, A.W. Thomas concluded that:

- ***There have been no material discrepancies between entitlements and distributions***
- ***There were no systemic ration over/under/delayed/partial/ineligible/denial of payments***
- ***Errors have occurred but there is no evidence of systemic abuse of the SC commodity distribution system, and client cards reflect materially accurate distribution to eligible beneficiaries.***

Enhanced capacity of GoE representatives at woreda and Kebele levels through tailored trainings on various aspects of commodity handling and management, improved transparency and increased accountability, better understanding of risks and improved knowledge on appropriate mitigation methods are steps to help ensure quality implementation. Additionally, empowered beneficiaries with updated knowledge on program objectives, entitlements, selection criteria and complaint mechanisms reduce any deliberate misuse of commodity resources.

IR 1.2: Depletion of Productive Assets Reduced

T2FS-DFAP's livelihoods pilot intervention was designed with the goal of improving food security and building household incomes for 3,000 youth beneficiaries between the ages of 16 and 29 in Oromia and Somali Regions. The pilot intervention set out to provide program youth an opportunity to broaden their scope of livelihood pathways by engaging them in various skills training activities and facilitating self- or wage employment opportunities. This, in turn, allowed beneficiaries to pursue a wide range of crop-livestock and/or off-farm employment options, by

building household assets and diversifying incomes, ultimately reducing the risk of household asset depletion.

1.2.1 Livelihood Diversification Activities

Enrollment and provision of basic skills and literacy numeracy trainings

Beneficiary youth were assessed for basic knowledge about financial management, life skills, and awareness of business opportunities in their vicinity. Results of the assessment indicated that a majority of youth assessed (85%) lacked knowledge about basic financial management, business and life skills. Most youth find themselves at a disadvantage from employment opportunities and viable business alternatives as a result. Hence, basic financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and life skills trainings was conducted for 2,920 youth, 33% of which were women, to gain an understanding of financial management, as well as to practice savings and credit. The supplementary life skills training involved a comprehensive behavioral change approach that concentrated on the development of communication, decision-making, emotion management, assertiveness, self-esteem, resistance to peer pressure, and relationship skills.

Remarkable attitudinal changes were observed among youth that attended these trainings as several success stories have indicated. Youth became highly motivated to plan their future careers, generate incomes and grow their savings. Shortly after their training, four (male) youth accessed employment opportunities at government and non-governmental offices, while 15 youth (10 male and 5 female) engaged in self-employment endeavors, providing services to their communities.

Similarly, three youth from Arero and Yabello Woredas made rapid, impactful changes following their basic trainings. Two of them expanded their existing small kiosks to slightly larger convenience stores by setting goals and mobilizing their existing finances, while the other cultivated his latent electro-mechanical skills and began a successful door-to-door business fixing electronic appliances.

USAID Comment: Thanks for sharing this good success story. Overall, do you think the project/scheme for youth was successful?

Save Response: As documented in this report, there are many still awaiting the certification from the TVET to secure employment. Moreover, the program ended at a very critical stage where we unfortunately were not in a position to see and capture most of the outcomes and impacts. For instance; most groups were formed but not yet started or fully engaged in businesses during the reporting period; start up grants were transferred at the very last months of the program (as we have to conduct all the training; formalizing the groups, creating the linkages, prior to transferring the grants) and were not able to capture the early successes.

With regard to women youth, low literacy rates are noticeably higher among this group of beneficiaries in the program's pastoralist and agro-pastoralist implementation areas. According to the 2011 Demographic Health Survey⁶, 61% of women in Oromia and 76% of women in Somali

⁶ Central Statistical Agency. (2011). *Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey*. Retrieved Oct. 26, 2016 from http://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/ET_2011_EDHS.pdf

Regions could not read at all, with women in Somali Region displaying the lowest women's literacy rate (20% vs. 80% in Addis Ababa) in the entire country.

USAID Comment: Do we have a sense of this statistic among the targeted age cohort, from 16-29. What is the literacy rate in this age group?

Save Response: No, we don't have a disaggregated data set currently available.

Hence, basic financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and life skills trainings is of particular importance to women beneficiaries. Positive results were noted from women soon after the onset of their training. In comparison to their male counterparts, women youth were quick to engage in informal village saving and loan associations (VSLA). In the months that followed the initial formation of VSLAs, women saved up to 20% of their training stipends, strengthened their financial capacity, and began to internally lend among their group members.

The financial empowerment of women in the implementation areas has far-reaching implications on numerous fronts in terms of addressing food insecurity. It equips women with the bargaining power necessary to further their education, start small-scale businesses, access information, and claim their rights. In Kurale Kebele of Dolo Bay Woreda, for instance, one women's group "*begana*" did business selling cereals and mobile credit cards, as reported by program field agents. Having studied the need for fuel by private businesses who own generators and motorbikes in their Kebele, this group of women is now planning to expand their business by opening a small fuel distribution shop.

Women's participation and leadership in income generation activity (IGA) groups has been recognized by USAID and other industry leaders as an effective way to enhance their financial literacy, market supply and demand literacy, team and group work skills, and give them ways to diversity their incomes and improve the financial and food security of their households. As discussions with women beneficiaries suggests, and as illustrated in Figure 1, women have taken an interest in the basic skills training, and are motivated to continue their education. Literacy and numeracy trainings, specifically targeting women, and catering to their gender-specific needs, are highly sought after in the program woredas and worth scaling up.



Figure 1: Women's literacy class participants raise their hands to express their interest in continuing their education, Dollo Ado Woreda, Somali Region. Photo by: Save the Children.

Enrollment and provision of formal and informal Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

TVET colleges are institutions that normally cater to youth who have attained low twelfth grade national examination scores and are unable to continue their education in government

universities. Prior to the capacity assessment of training service providers in and around the program operation woredas, service procurement agreements were signed with three viable TVETs and one skills training center in the first quarter. The six-month TVET programs, and three-month informal TVET programs, were carried out at Yabello Polytechnic, Oromia Pastoral TVET, Gode Pastoral & Polytechnic TVET College, and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) skills training center.

Eligible TVET students were then selected and mobilized for enrollment. A total of 780 youth (438 male and 342 female; 111% achievement against annual plan) beneficiaries were selected and enrolled in formal and informal TVET institutions. Of the 780 youth that were enrolled in the program, 98 students were able to sit for the national competency exam and received their certification. The remaining 682 youth beneficiaries completed their courses and received their school completion certificates (see Figure 2); however, due largely to the TVET institutions' delay in scheduling the final assessment, the latter group of beneficiaries are still waiting to sit for their national competency exam and receive certification. Once the examination schedule for the coming academic year is availed by the government, students can sit for the examination at a time of their choosing.

USAID Comment: Was this commitment bound by a MoU or anything to ensure it happened post close out?

Save Comment: No MOU signed, but it is a formal procedure of the government.



Figure 2: Gode Polytechnic TVET College Graduates pose for pictures, Gode Zone, Somali Region. Pictures by: Save the Children.

Upon completion of their TVET courses, and having passed the national TVET exam, students received TVET certifications which have benefited youth greatly in their employment seeking endeavors with 15 youth already having secured employment in Somali and Oromia Region. Once certified, a wider range of options are available for youth who wish to engage in either governmental or private sector institutions. TVET certification is a viable, sustainable solution for youth, who were once idle, to engage in off-farm activities, invest in innovative business plans, facilitate further education, and contribute to household asset build-up. Its growing support from government partners and private agencies also suggests that TVETs will be scaled-up to wider implementation areas in the foreseeable future.

Provision of workforce placement service

The major activity under this result area was facilitating linkage of youth groups to government, non-government, and private enterprise employers, or assisting self and group business activities. Generally, government TVET, Micro- and Small Enterprise (MSE), and Microfinance Institutions work together to provide a sequential set of services for TVET trainees in order to support students attain a suitable working space, support the formation of group businesses and expedite their licensing, create linkages to viable markets and facilitate access to credit services.

Youth career consultations revealed that a majority of youth were interested in running their own businesses, including women from the low literacy level category. As a result, following intensive consultation the program decided to increase economic engagement beneficiaries from the originally planned number of 150 to 400 youth. This group was guided through various consultation stages for the purpose of developing commercial ideas, identifying the community's need for a particular product or service, acquiring resources, organizing work places, and preparing business plans. Following rigorous consultation and approval of business plans, a total of 367 eligible youth beneficiaries, out of which 215 were women, received grants of USD \$200 per individual as a start-up capital through T2FS-DFAP to launch new individual and group businesses.

Fifty-two youth opened individual businesses with a total estimated budget of USD \$13,300 pooled from the start-up grants, savings from training allowances, and support from family members. Moreover, 315 youth were able to form 46 group businesses, out of which 29 group businesses were able to receive licensing, and one group received access to credit services from Arero Woreda's Oromia Credit Saving and Share Company. It is anticipated that the remaining individual and group businesses formed will receive access to credit from such governmental organizations in the near future.

USAID Comment: What preconditions or binding instruments were fulfilled by the program to ensure that these participants are able to grant credit in the future now that the program closed?

Save Response: They were trained to present themselves and negotiate with financial institutions; prepare a feasible business plan; linkages were created with the financial institutions and cooperatives sector (within the office of agriculture). With all these in place and favorable policies that encourage such interventions, the probability for these groups to secure funding is very high.

Formation of VSLA group

In addition to a comprehensive set of financial literacy and entrepreneurial trainings, the program aimed at promoting on site saving. Sensitization activities were regularly carried out to strengthen the savings practice of targeted clients. The goal was to facilitate sustainable access to financial services for the purpose of income generating opportunities for low-income youth, and women in particular. Fifty-four rural VSLAs were established, 11 of which consisted of exclusively women members. Group members nominated a chair person, secretary, and cashier to strengthen their foundation, and agreed upon local by-laws to manage the group.

USAID Comment: These 54 VSLA groups. Are they totally established and managed by the targeted livelihood project beneficiaries?

Save Response: Yes

SC printed and distributed cash transfer booklets to each beneficiary which enabled them to track their transfers and weigh their balances. After having implemented this local saving practice, all literacy group beneficiaries formed VSLA groups, with ten to twenty members per group, and agreed to save 20% of their monthly training allowance. In Arero Woreda, for instance, eight VSLA groups from four piloted Kebeles have saved USD 4,181 thus far and are managing their savings through selected committee members (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Beneficiaries collecting their monthly training allowance in a Woreda, Somali Region (left); and a weekly VSLA meeting in Arero Woreda, Somali Region (right). Pictures by: Save the Children.

Considering the livelihoods pilot intervention has come to its end, program management discussed prospects of the handover with the local government offices including cooperative offices, MSEs, and education and agriculture offices. Accordingly, the government offices recognized the effort made by SC and conveyed their plan to use lessons learnt from SC's pilot livelihood intervention for the upcoming PSNP IV which will include a livelihoods component. The governmental offices also expressed an interest in scaling up the literacy numeracy activities which were observed to benefit women participants in terms of improving their literacy level, understanding of financial treasury, and diversifying their livelihood options.

To ensure sustainability of the started livelihood activities, a discussion was held with SC's USAID-funded POTENTIAL project to transfer the beneficiaries and continue supporting them after the program closeout. The POTENTIAL program agreed to continue supporting youth in the areas of work readiness, soft skills, and other complementary trainings for the economic engagement groups and TVET graduates as a short term plan, and to create market linkages for vocational skills in the long run.

USAID Comment: This is great news. Does that mean POTENTIAL exactly overlays with the DFAP woredas in both the regions?

Save Comment: Not in both regions. It is only in Oromiya (Borena)

Similarly, SC collaborated with NRC for the continued support of T2FS livelihoods beneficiaries in Dollo Ado through transfer of various skills trainings that will extend beyond the T2FS closeout. Out of the planned 150 target youth, a total of 127 trainees had graduated from NRC training centers in Helowen and Malkadida Kebeles of Dollo Ado Woreda. NRC will continue the support and follow up of these youth beyond T2FS.

IR 1.3: Natural Resource Assets and their Management Improved

T2FS in collaboration with local communities and relevant government partners implemented a number of PVV activities during the reporting period including water resource developments, communal rangeland enclosures, construction of various soil and water conservation structures on degraded rangelands, and construction of small scale irrigation canals. In addition to reducing rangeland degradation, NRM activities focused on promoting sustainable rangeland management practices, strengthening local institutions, and enabling equitable access to natural resources.

The NRM component incorporated capacity building strategies to strengthen the management of natural resource assets. It engaged the local community in NRM trainings and experience sharing visits, established resource management committees and facilitated elders' council meetings. Institutional capacity building efforts helped equip local communities and government partners with the skills to manage resources in a sustainable and productive manner. Management systems include well-defined mechanisms for conflict resolution and for ensuring access rights for vulnerable populations, such as women and chronically poor community members. Sustainable NRM ensures a healthy resource base that reduces the vulnerability of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities to natural disasters, such as drought.

Some of the key participatory processes undertaken during the implementation of NRM activities included participatory planning, demand-driven identification of activities, environmental screening for each NRM activity and active participation of the beneficiaries and government partners throughout the entire process.

1.3.1 Water Resource Development

Scarcity of water for domestic use and for livestock, particularly during long dry seasons, is widespread in the low-lands of the program target woredas. Since the beginning of the program, communities have prioritized water supply as a critical need. In line with this, T2FS developed various water schemes in this reporting period including 16 birkas (against annual plan of 19), 98 community ponds (against annual plan of 101), five traditional well rehabilitations with concrete watering troughs (100% achievement of annual plan), and an additional 12 roof water harvesting reservoirs.

Despite the fact that newly constructed birkas have not yet collected water, water development activities completed over the last four years have improved community access to water for domestic use. The Annual Survey reports that 62% (IPTT 1.3.4) of the interviewed HHs stated they have access to an improved water source for domestic use during the dry season. On average, water is available in the constructed schemes for 8.6 months (IPTT 1.3.2) during the year.

USAID Comment: Can you clarify how this is know? What structures are providing this length of water availability? Schemes in the pastoral region typically reserve water to sustain people for maybe a maximum of 3 to 4 months in a year. In 2016/17 this is likely even less given current reports of drought and lack of water.

Save Response: It is known from the survey and physical observation by the team. The report was referring to the season before 2017 and the current drought. The Birkas are the structures that are referred to. The point here is they are using water as economically as possible. In most instances they exhaust all other resources before starting using the birkas, which are by far well protected and clean.

According to discussions with beneficiaries during field monitoring visits, as a result of the constructed water schemes, the distance traveled to collect water has significantly declined for women and girls who customarily have the task of collecting water for domestic use. For example, in the Dhedim community of Yabello Woreda time spent fetching water was reduced from 5 hours a day to 30 minutes as a result of T2FSbirka constructed in the area (Bekele, 2015). Field reports and discussion with the community indicates that time saved from fetching water has given women more time for other productive activities and enabled young girls to go to school. In this reporting period, the program also installed 12 plastic reservoirs (10 cubic meters each) on newly constructed social services accommodations including schools, veterinary posts, and health posts to make water available for these facilities.

With regards to water for livestock, T2FS rehabilitated five traditional wells with concrete cattle troughs - four in Arero and one in Yabello Woreda. The rehabilitated wells serve as many as 75 animals at a time, save labor required for frequent maintenance of the mud-made traditional troughs and provide improved water quality with reduced turbidity.

To ensure sustainability of the constructed water facilities, water management committees consisting of seven members per water point were established and trained for all 21 water points (five traditional wells and 16 birkas). Hence, the management of these structures is overseen by committees organized and trained by the program. However, the Annual Survey results reveal that only 72% of the interviewed HHs believes that PW activities presently have management mechanisms. This may be due to respondents' lack of awareness of the management mechanisms in place rather than actual performance. Awareness-raising sessions for PSNP and non-PSNP users on the appropriate use of facilities and the existence and functionality of management mechanisms may improve community awareness in this regard.



Figure 4: Birka constructed by SC in Dugda Dawa Woreda, Oromia Region (left); and concrete watering trough on rehabilitated traditional well, Arero Woreda, Oromia Region (right). Photo by: Save the Children.

The sustainability of water facilities constructed in the operational woredas appears to be promising. According to the Best Practices study, the Gubedley and Dhedim communities of Somali and Oromia Regions respectively, are self-sufficiently maintaining the birka facilities in their vicinities. Having considered the immense benefits of birkas, the users in these communities

agreed to pay a minimal fee which is accrued and later serves to cover maintenance costs. A similar practice was observed with birka users in the Chamme community of Dugda Dawa Woreda. The Chamme birka users pay a monthly fee of ETB 5⁷ to use 20 liters of water per day. The Chamme community has managed to save about ETB \$1,900 through this type of system.

Water usage fees are generally encouraged following the development of water sources, particularly where areas are prone to extreme levels of water scarcity. Indeed, it is essential that community members reach a consensus on usage fees prior to exercising this practice so as not to exclude extremely destitute households. Once a consensus has been reached, usage fees become a means of sustaining water projects, and are a testament to the level of commitment and sense of ownership established among user communities.

1.3.2 Small Scale Irrigation

In Somali Region, communities in riverine areas earn their livelihoods from farming through small scale pump irrigation and livestock rearing. These communities' traditionally use earth canals to irrigate their farmlands. Earth canals are disadvantageous in that they require more labor for frequent maintenance, are prone to water loss through seepage and consume greater fuel for pumping as a result; hence, earth canals raise the cost of production. In order to resolve this problem, T2FS in collaboration with irrigation users and government partners lined some primary earth canals where seepage is highest with concrete.

In this reporting period, the program supported the community through the construction of 1,705 meters of concrete irrigation canals that will significantly reduce cost of production. According to the Best Practices study, in an analysis performed on 200 meters of concrete canals, production cost was reduced by 56% on the Dhesheg irrigation scheme in Dollo Ado Woreda.

The program also supported the construction of an additional 29,990 meters of secondary and tertiary earth canals that helped irrigate additional farmlands. The annual target for both lined and earth canals for FY16 was 32,205 meters, 31,695 meters of which was successfully constructed. The constructed canals enabled beneficiaries to irrigate 79ha of land. The beneficiary communities mainly produce fruits, vegetables, fodder and cereals for their households and animal consumption and for market sales.



⁷ ETB 22.30 equivalent to USD 1.00

Figure 5: Concrete irrigation canal in Dollo Ado Woreda, Somali Region (left); and beneficiary digging at the lush papaya field irrigated by concrete canal, Dollo Ado, Somali Region (right). Photos by Save the Children.

1.3.3 Rangeland Development

The program has been supporting rangeland reclamation through selective bush thinning, communal rangeland closures, and the construction of soil and water conservation measures on degraded rangelands designed to encourage natural regeneration of grasses. Physical observations and numerous discussions with beneficiaries and government partners in the field revealed that rangeland rehabilitation activities have had positive outcomes including reduced erosion, and increased vegetative ground cover that contributed to an increase in the quantity and quality of forage for pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities. This has increased community resilience by increasing available dry season livestock feed, protecting livestock assets and sustaining milk production for children during the prolonged dry season.

Selective bush thinning

In the program woredas, progressive increase in the density of undesirable woody plant cover, beyond a critical level, and the loss of grass in rangelands areas has reduced productivity due to severe competition for available water and nutrients. This results in increased soil erosion and loss of eatable grass species. In order to reduce the negative effects of bush encroachment on pastoral and agro-pastoral economies, the program, in collaboration with beneficiary community and government partners, engaged in selective bush thinning as a rangeland management method. Accordingly, 4,783 ha (against annual plan of 4,424ha) of rangeland were rehabilitated through selective bush thinning in this reporting year.

1.3.4 Soil and Water Conservation (SWC)

In most of the program woredas, traditional rangelands were degraded through excessive, uncontrolled grazing which resulted in a loss of biomass and soil erosion. This degraded land would remain bare even with good rains unless remedial actions were taken to control erosion and facilitate infiltration of rainwater, while simultaneously promoting herbaceous biomass and conservation of species diversity.

The program initially introduced SWC practices in Dugda Dawa Woreda as a pilot project in 2013. Based on the lessons learnt and positive outcomes from Dugda Dawa, the program, with support of government partners and customary leaders, progressively expanded this activity to other program woredas. Considering soil and water conservation activities were uncommon in pastoral areas, the program faced challenges in convincing the communities of the benefits conservation activities could have on their environments, and their livelihoods. The program worked diligently to facilitate experience sharing visits and conduct awareness-raising trainings to introduce the benefits of the rangeland management technology.

Eventually, SWC activities gained more popularity in the program woredas as more activities began to be implemented towards the latter years of the program. Accordingly, construction of 535 (against annual plan of 531) km of soil bunds, 398,211 (against annual plan of 588,553) micro basins, and 60,480 (against annual plan of 54,432) cubic meters of check dams (using both local materials and gabions) were completed by the program in this reporting period. In addition, on severely degraded land, where naturally embedded seed in the soil is expected to be low, 1,695kg

of suitable Sudan grass seed was sown in Oromia Region. In consultation with the communities, the rehabilitated areas are closed from interference of human and livestock activity for two to three years to ensure stabilization of SWC structures and adequate recovery of grass coverage.

Although the community is unable to reap immediate benefits from SWC activities, the long-term benefits of rehabilitated land can significantly improve livelihoods, as has been observed with Cholksa and Dhrito communities in Yabello, and Chame and Burkitu communities in Dugda Dawa Woreda. Based on field observations and conversations held with beneficiaries, the communities used grass and forage from the rehabilitated enclosures by making hay to feed lactating and weak animals during the dry season.



Figure 6: Beneficiary cuts grass from a land enclosure in Yabello Woreda, Oromia Region (left); and forage grown atop microbasins in Dugda Dawa Woreda, Oromia Region (right). Photo by: Save the Children.

IR I.4: Social Service Community Assets Developed

Investment in infrastructure and improved access to basic services is necessary to improve the effectiveness of the program and apply a holistic approach towards curbing the challenges of T2FS-DFAP's pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. As such, a total of 20 institutions, including nine primary school expansions (100% achievement of annual target), four veterinary posts (against annual plan of two), and four pastoral training centers (against annual plan of three), and an additional three health posts, among other infrastructures, were constructed in this reporting period. Although infrastructures constructed in this reporting period have not begun rendering services to the communities as of the timing of this submission, the cumulative efforts of T2FS-DFAP's four years of social service asset developments have resulted in a positive outcome.

To ensure sustainability of the constructed infrastructures, the program worked closely with the communities and relevant government line offices. Beneficiaries were involved in the collection and loading of sand and stone for the construction. Moreover, all the developed infrastructures were handed over to woreda sector offices. The effectiveness of these activities will depend largely on the government's commitment to equip the structures with the necessary materials, assign professionals for their management, and allocate appropriate budgets as promised during the handover the program.



Figure 7: Additional classrooms constructed with roof water harvesting structure, Dugda Dawa Woreda, Oromia Region (left); and school constructed in Arero Woreda (right). Photo by: Save the Children.

IR 1.5: Community and GoE Management of T2FS-DFAP Improved

The aim of T2FS-DFAP's capacity building component in FY16 was to deliver a wide range of trainings by utilizing feedback mechanisms and lessons from the previous years. As in FY15, capacity building activities were organized under three main strategies: PW and NRM related activities; program management, planning, implementation, monitoring and follow up; and gender mainstreaming for key government staff and community members. Taking into consideration the program phase out, trainings also emphasized operationalization and sustainability of community assets at the WFSTF, KFSTF, and community level.

As indicated by the aforementioned Program Learning and Best Practices Documentation, capacity building trainings, such as such in Disaster Risk Reduction, Early Warning, Do No Harm (DNH), NRM, and Hygiene and Sanitation are relevant to all program participants, but are of particular importance for WFSTFs and KFSTFs which assume a wide range of program operational responsibilities.

The program supported the WFSTFs with the documentation of guidelines and manuals to assist WFSTFs and woreda experts in accessing information and enhancing their familiarity of the program procedures. Accordingly, the IPTT (1.5.4) indicated that 100% of the interviewed WFSTFs reported the availability of PSNP Program Implementation Manual (PIM) manual, targeting documentation, and appeal procedures in their respective offices. The improved capacity of government partners in program implementation has also been reflected through the capacity of the woreda sector offices in Dollo Bay and Bare Woredas that took over the implementation of all PW/NRM projects during FY16 as remarked by the regional PSNP officials during the closeout workshops.

1.5.1 Natural Resource and Public Work Related Capacity Building Strategies

Various approaches were further used to cascade capacity building trainings and meetings to the Kebele level, with increasing participation of the customary institution leaders and women. Women in the program operation areas are engaged more in reproductive activities than men and find it difficult to travel to distant locations for trainings. Hence, cascading of capacity building activities at the grassroots level increases the participation of Customary Institution (CI) leaders and women, and facilitates interaction with local systems and knowledge. As a result, capacity on natural resource management, management of conflict over resource utilization, as well as equitable use of communal assets showed considerable improvement from previous years. In this

reporting period, 100% (exceeding the 95% annual target; IPTT 1.5.11) of PSNP committees maintained CI membership.

In FY16, as part of PW and NRM capacity building strategies, numerous capacity building trainings were provided to 2,561 (1,723 males and 838 females; IPTT 1.5.8) individuals, user committees, community leaders, and Kebele level institutions. As a result of this program, 81%, of the targeted 95% beneficiaries, have an adequate understanding of the program objectives and design, actively engage in program operations, and have developed a sense of ownership of program activities.



Figure 8: Foremen practical training on SWC at Hallona rangeland, Arero Woreda, Somali Region (left); and Jijidu community SWC site, Yabello Woreda, Oromia Region. Pictures by: Aliye Dalu (left) and Duba Tedecha (right), Save the Children.

1.5.2 Program management, planning, implementation, monitoring and follow up strategy

Capacity building trainings on program management, planning, implementation, monitoring and follow up strategies mainly focused on pastoral PW guidelines and targeting, Disaster Risk Management, commodity management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and accountability, and DNH. A total of 3,625 (2,580 male and 1,045 female) woreda government partners and community level committees benefited from these trainings. DNH activities were particularly useful as various members of the community are able to discuss prominent issues and deliberate resolutions.

Experience-sharing visits were also planned and organized based on feedback from woreda government partners during similar visits in FY15. Among the experience-sharing destinations was the Boko area enclosure in Dugda Dawa Woreda, for instance, which was once barren land. Its rehabilitation has shown major improvements, and visitors were able to see that totally devoid land has the potential for revitalization. Woreda government partners who have partaken in experience sharing visits to other sites, including Didimtu SWC site in Yabello Woreda and Cheme Birka site in Dugda Dawa Woreda, have repeatedly underscored that visits to the successful rangeland and water development schemes motivated visitors to cascade the experiences to their colleagues and initiate scale up of similar activities within their own operational woredas. These opinions were echoed by woreda and zonal government representatives who appreciated the effectiveness of Title-II experience-sharing visits across regions, as expressed in their closing remarks during a T2FS-DFAP's closeout workshop in Oromia Region.

In this reporting period, an inter-pastoralist experience-sharing visit was organized with the objective of identifying best performing Kebeles and sharing their best practices and lessons learnt. Ten visits were undertaken in FY16 (100% achievement against annual plan); a total of 186 (162 male and 24 female) community leaders, government staff, and Kebele chairpersons participated.

1.5.3 Capacity building through gender mainstreaming activities

In addition to its numerous program management and NRM activities, the capacity building component encompassed a number of gender mainstreaming objectives to promote gender equity in its implementation woredas. Despite GoE's efforts to address gender gaps through various strategies, women in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of Ethiopia are still disadvantaged with regards to access to information, division of labor, decision-making roles, as well as access to programmatic entitlements such as that of the T2FS-DFAP.

As a result, the program's capacity building strategies included awareness raising training for staff and the community on gender-related T2FS-DFAP provisions, adequate nutrition for pregnant and lactating women, campaigns in schools to discourage Harmful Traditional Practices, and leadership training for women, staff, and government sector offices. In FY16 alone, a total of 2,906 participants (109% achievement against annual plan of 2,672 participants) received one or more gender mainstreaming trainings across the two implementation regions.

The percentage of men who support joint decision-making in the household, regarding children's education, household expenditure, and utilization of food sources, amounted to 63% (IPTT G.4), in accordance with the Annual Survey results. Although this figure is lower than the Life of Award target of 80%, it does not account for the higher percentage of women who make decisions independently on issues like use of food commodities (58% vs. 4% of men). In line with the findings of the 2012 Gender Analysis, women still maintain lower decision-making power regarding matters such as household expenditure (4% vs. 23% of their male counterparts), and child marriage (4% against 17% for men). The data suggests that although a greater percentage of households are making joint decisions, more capacity building trainings are required to bring about greater results in the implementation woredas.

It was hypothesized at the onset of FY16 that leadership training for women members of the community and government staff, as well as activities to reduce the occurrence of Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) would empower women in a number of ways including access to information, improved decision-making, and increased mobility. The program made great progress in this front with as many as 44 campaigns held at schools and PVW sites to discourage HTPs, and a 60% (IPTT G.3) of women having assumed leadership positions through various groups and committees. In comparison to last year's 40%, this is a major improvement. This gives us confidence that a greater percentage of beneficiaries will report more equitable opportunities as these changes begin to take effect in the coming years. Discussions with women beneficiaries in Dugda Dawa and Yabello Woredas of Oromia Region further indicated stern opposition towards HTPs, such as early child marriage and female circumcision, as more and more mothers are gaining an awareness of the negative physical and psychosocial effects of such practices.

Gender-related capacity building strategies achieved great results in FY16 due largely to the program's collaboration with government partners, namely the Women's, Children's, and Youth

Affairs offices and Health Extension Workers. Consistency of messages from these two government sector offices in combination with T2FS-DFAP effectively reinforces gender mainstreaming messages to the audiences. Moreover, the diversity in target audiences, ranging from government staff, to community leaders, community members, and school age children, was greatly advantageous in reaching a wide range of beneficiaries so as to infiltrate and mainstream gender at all levels of the community.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Similar to FY16, in this reporting period, program staff at the field and Country Office (CO) engaged in a number of M&E activities to ensure program accountability and transparency to communities and other key stakeholders. The team also assessed and collected program outputs and outcomes through data collection, completion of routine and periodical checklists, as prescribed in the program M&E framework, and by compiling periodic reports and data quality checks.

To assure a sense of accountability, transparency, and sustainability of program operations, the M&E field staff shared and cascaded the program's Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) with allocation budget from woreda to Kebele level. Moreover, Participatory Joint Monitoring and Evaluation (PJME) teams were established at the woreda and Kebele levels to oversee the program activity quality, performance and sustainability. In this reporting period, 28 PJME activities were conducted at the woreda level. The teams went out to project sites to follow up on community concerns and monitor the progress of program activities. They also collected feedback from community members on implementation gaps, and suggested areas for improvement.

A similar PME team was established at the community level composed of elders, men, women, youth, and development agents to evaluate community level projects. During FY16, 55 community level joint M&E teams were strengthened through training and stationary material inputs such as file boxes, shelves, and other stationary materials. Furthermore, five woreda level PJME teams received monitoring and evaluation training; and an additional 96 (against annual target of 89 participants) government staff, and woreda and Kebele level PJME team members received training on participatory M&E practices.

Table 2: Key M&E activities undertaken in FY16

Activity	Responsibility	Frequency
FDP monitoring	Food monitors	Per round
PDM survey	Addis Ababa based M&E Coordinators	Quarterly
Participatory joint monitoring and evaluation visits	Woreda M&E officers	Quarterly
Regular program thematic area implementation monitoring	Addis Ababa based M&E coordinators and Technical Specialists	Quarterly
Annual program survey	Woreda M&E officers and Addis Ababa based M&E staff	Annually
PW and NRM progress monitoring	Woreda based Technical Officers	Weekly

Detailed Implementation Plan

The program's year 5 DIP, which was prepared in accordance with the Community Action Planning efforts in 2013, was submitted and approved by USAID as part of the year 5 Pipeline and Resource Estimates Proposal (PREP). Following approval of the PREP, SC engaged with the community and woreda leadership to finalize the DIP, however, modifications were frequently applied. Among the key amendments to the FY16 DIP were:

- After the approval of the DIP, the WFSTFs changed some of the birka activities to other social infrastructures such as schools, veterinary posts, and irrigation canal constructions. As a result there was a reduction of planned birkas from 19 to 16 (in Somali Region, one birka was changed to irrigation canal construction, and in Oromia Region, two birkas were changed to a classroom expansion and to a veterinary post).
- On the contrary, in Oromia, WFSTF revised the plan based on discussion with the community to *prioritize* birka construction instead of hand dug wells. Solar pump for irrigation also shifted to school and a health post construction based on the decision of WFSTFs due to the unavailability of solar pumps in the market.

A number of operational issues also affected program outputs, resulting in actuals both above and below targets especially activities such as establishment and support of fodder production sites on degraded rangeland, fruit and forage tree production on selected soil and water conservation structures, and micro-basin construction. Initially, the project was considered to cover vast areas; however, following revision by the WFSTFs, the number reduced significantly. Table 3 below indicates that a significant number of activities registered below 90% achievement. Low attendance at PW and NRM capacity building trainings due to simultaneous government mass mobilization activities, substandard contractor capacity, and shortage of industrial materials were among the factors that contributed to the lag in completion of some activities in this reporting period.

Table 3: DIP program output performance against targets in FY16

Performance by indicator	Number project	% achievement from total
Within 10% of planned target	35	51.4%
Achievement above 10% of plan	14	20.6%
Achievement below 10% of plan	19	28%

Annual and PDM survey

The Annual and PDM surveys were conducted to measure the performance of food commodity management, as well as other program operations indicators. FDQA, M&E field teams, and the CO M&E unit conducted the survey after having received rigorous two day trainings on M&E procedures. The PDM survey was conducted from June 13 to 23, 2016 and the Annual Survey was conducted from August 18 to 30, 2016. Kobo software was applied to make the data collection process easier and standardize the online data collection tools. Data entry and analyses were performed by the CO M&E unit using SPSS software.

A two-stage sampling method was used for both PDM and the Annual Survey in which the primary unit was “Kebele” selected using the Probability Proportion to Size, and the secondary unit was “household” selected using simple random sampling techniques from the population. A total of 350 households, 150 from Somali Region and 200 from Oromia Region, were selected using the standard sampling formula. Twenty-five HHs were selected per Kebele – six Kebeles from Dollo Ado and eight from Oromia’s four woredas.

The survey questionnaires were designed to consider the key output and outcome indicators stated in the IPTT. Following the drafting of a supplementary questionnaire by the M&E department, SC Head Office staff and SC CO managers of all thematic areas reviewed and commented on the feasibility of the questionnaires. Additional performance indicators were tracked from different data sources including MBLs, Payroll sheet reports, the Annual Survey, PDM survey, regular Detail Implementation Plan reports, and other monitoring tools.

Challenges, Successes, and Lessons Learnt

The significant increase in beneficiary caseloads, coupled with the newly revised components of the PIM, posed challenges for operationalizing and effectively implementing commodity operations. However, management made a swift adaptation to the changes by increasing program staff and providing reinforcement trainings. Performance monitoring conducted by senior level staff from CO was further instrumental in reducing errors and improving quality of implementation. The Detailed Risk Identification and Mitigation Manual, developed in 2013, was of great assistance in this respect.

In this reporting period, it was discovered that use of the ‘contingency mechanism’ was not clear among key stakeholders. It became apparent to T2FS-DFAP that contingency use should be properly coordinated among all actors for appropriate resource utilization. SC was finally able to make the WFSTF understand that 5% contingency was not an entitlement but rather a resource to be used during localized/regional emergency situations, or for sick people/malnourished children, by approving only four rounds in Oromia, and one round in Somali Regions.

Delayed beneficiary registration by the regional governments caused the beneficiary verification process to lag behind schedule in this reporting period. Technical issues, such as delayed provision of new client cards by regions and capturing beneficiary photos, also resulted in a slow paced start to program activities. T2FS-DFAP took the necessary mitigation measures by using temporary client cards to register transfers, although this was time-consuming and cumbersome.

Improved transparency through public posting of beneficiary lists and proactive involvement of SC and government representatives reduced potentially fraudulent activities and helped target eligible individuals for the program. Although targeting was conducted by GoE representatives, joint validation exercises to confirm beneficiary eligibility further reduced inclusion and exclusion errors. Public posting of annual distribution plans also enabled beneficiaries to make strategic decisions on household expenditures. Moreover, beneficiaries were empowered through capacity building trainings allowing them to become more aware of the program’s objectives and their entitlements. This significantly reduced the occurrence of commodity misuse at distribution points by few, dominant individuals.

Related to the USG Inspector General Audit, SC failed to foster a consultative-collaborative partnership with USAID resulting in sub-optimal utilization of time and opportunity. More often than not, time was utilized for audit preparation, and reviews which could have been used for better management and implementation.

Strong monitoring systems improved performance and were able to report even on small fraud or theft cases of USD 20. SC strives to ensure that all cases are reported in a transparent and accountable process. The fact that SC finds such cases reports them in a program valued at almost \$100 million demonstrates SC's commitment to strong oversight.

Regarding livelihoods activities, several challenges were witnessed with existing TVET institutions in the program areas. In Somali Region, TVET institutions are few and far apart, and those nearby are barely functional. This especially had implications on women beneficiaries who are already deprived of time. Although enrollment set a target of 50% women, a high dropout rate (85 students out of the initial 342 enrolled) was reported among women in FY16. Two of the most recurring reasons for dropout included the distance and location of TVET institutions and shortage of time to attend classes. In Oromia, TVET institutions lacked managerial capacity and the provision of necessary training materials. Building TVET institutions in locations strategically located to target women, building the capacity of government owned TVET institutions, and encouraging private ownership of TVET institutions in the implementation woredas may help mitigate some of these challenges.

Moreover, although transfers should generally be processed through bank systems, the program faced a challenge in this respect as a number of literacy, numeracy youth beneficiaries did not fulfill the registration requirements (such as Kebele identification cards) of nearby financial institutions. T2FS-DFAP overcame this obstacle by replacing the bank transfer system with local VSLA groups that received their monthly training allowance through a payroll system and distributing cash transfer booklets to youth beneficiaries.

In the area of social service infrastructure construction, limited capacity of contractors and suppliers was a major challenge. Management took various actions to overcome some of these difficulties, including bulk procurement of construction materials such as cement and iron bars in Addis Ababa, crushed aggregate and concrete supplies at the construction sites using locally organized youth groups. This significantly reduced cost and saved time.

Free labor mobilization for non PSNP watershed development activities by the local government, especially in Oromia Region, posed a challenge on rangeland rehabilitation activities due to conflicting time schedules between the T2FS-DFAP and government PW activities. Nevertheless, an attempt was made by the program to minimize this gap through continuous engagement with local governments at different levels to harmonize government mass mobilization with PSNP PW activities.

Moreover, it appears the role of development agents need to be redefined. This was a challenge with respect to endorsing and approving actual work done by PSNP participants.

Another implementation challenge for the program noted during the reporting period was the political unrest in some areas of Oromia Region which hampered overall mobility. Security issues prevented timely dispatch and therefore delayed distributions during March and April 2016. Nonetheless, SC staff effectively coped with the unforeseen events and program implementation continued without any major disruption.

Despite encountered challenges, the program made great effort to accomplish the planned activities across all the components including capacity building both for community representatives and government partners, natural resource management, livelihoods activities, and basic infrastructure development. Cultivating teams and boosting vertical and horizontal collaborations are some of the most important successful strategies employed by program management for the results achieved during this reporting period.

Significant effort was made by the program to engage traditional leaders and village elders throughout the program implementation process. Engaging community leaders and community based institutions as stakeholders in the program proved to be invaluable. Local institutions and community leaders are highly recognized, influential figures of their local communities; as such, their involvement and input in mobilizing the community to take part in program planning and implementation is of paramount importance to ensure ownership and sustainability of program gains.

In addition, a good understanding of the local context was key to enabling successful PW activity, identification, and implementation which was responsive to the needs of the community and built on existing local knowledge.